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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
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MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** May 4, 2020

**TO:** Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents  
Public School Academy Directors

**FROM:** Dr. Scott M. Koenigsknecht, Deputy Superintendent  
P-20 System and Student Transitions 

**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 and the Head Start Community

COVID-19 has strongly affected all Head Start and Early Head Start programs, enrolled children, their families, and their communities. In response to COVID-19, guidance and resources from the federal Office of Head Start (OHS) within the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services can be found online at the Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center (ECLKC), *COVID-19 and the Head Start Community*, <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/coronavirus/covid-19-head-start-community>. (OHS, 2020)

Specifically, *Responding to COVID-19*, <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/coronavirus/responding-covid-19>, provides the most up-to-date guidance and resources to ensure that all programs are able to support staff, children, and families during this critical time.

Notable updates include:

- The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, 2020 [P.L. 116-136] was signed into law by President Trump on March 27, 2020. This legislation includes \$750 million for programs under the Head Start Act to support preventative, preparedness, and response activities related to the coronavirus. Up to \$500 million is available for programs to operate supplemental summer programs and some \$250 million is available for one-time activities in response to COVID-19. Program Instruction ACF-PI-HS-20-03 FY 2020, *Supplemental Funds in Response to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)*, <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/pi/acf-pi-hs-20-03>, provides information about supplemental funds available for Head Start programs in response to COVID-19 and describes the purpose, eligibility, and application

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process for supplemental summer programs and one-time activities in response to COVID-19. (OHS, 2020)

- The federal OHS office is directing programs to continue to pay wages and provide benefits for staff unable to report to work during center closures due to COVID-19. This directive does not apply to non-COVID-19 related program closures during which employees would not otherwise be paid, such as summer breaks. The *Update to Wages and Benefits Flexibility During the COVID-19 Pandemic* guidance can be found at <http://hsicc.cmail20.com/t/ViewEmail/j/29C1A34CFBE2B1562540EF23F30FED/79A087682734D8FDF6A1C87C670A6B9F>. (OHS, 2020)
- Head Start and Early Head Start programs may provide meals and snacks to children during center closures (OHS, 2020). The U.S. Department of Agriculture has waived its group setting meal requirement for closed schools and authorized special flexibilities for many states. *Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Flexibilities* guidance can be found at <http://hsicc.cmail20.com/t/ViewEmail/j/91F8634AED7F9C0B2540EF23F30FED/CF7A06A9A53541ECD9767B6002735221>. (OHS, 2020)

Additional information related to COVID-19 and the Michigan Head Start Community can be found at The Michigan Head Start Association, *COVID-19 Information and Resources*, [www.michheadstart.org/covid-19](http://www.michheadstart.org/covid-19) (Michigan Head Start Association, 2020).

For questions regarding this memo, please contact Cynthia Derby at [derbyc@michigan.gov](mailto:derbyc@michigan.gov) or 517-930-4387.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance